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Letter dated 31 March 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward to you the attached report of the workshop for newly elected and present Security Council members, which was held on 9 and 10 December 2004 at the Dolce Tarrytown House, New York. The report has been finalized in the light of comments received from the participants. The final report has been compiled in accordance with the Chatham House Rules under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Finland.

Based on the very positive feedback we received from the participants, the Government of Finland remains committed to sponsoring the workshop as an annual event. The Government of Finland expresses the hope that this report will not only assist in familiarizing newly elected members with the working methods and procedures of the Council, but also contribute to a better understanding among the wider United Nations membership of the complexity of the work of the Council.

I should be grateful, accordingly, if this report could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kirsti **Lintonen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

"Hitting the ground running": second annual workshop for newly elected members of the Security Council

9 and 10 December 2004
Dolce Tarrytown House
Tarrytown, New York

The Government of Finland – in cooperation with the Center on International Organization of Columbia University, the Security Council Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) – convened the second annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council on 9 and 10 December 2004.

The objective of the workshop was to help familiarize the newly elected members with the practice, procedure and working methods of the Council so that they might "hit the ground running" when they joined the Council on 1 January 2005. It was also intended to offer members of the Council an opportunity to reflect on their work in an informal setting. The workshop was designed to complement the annual UNITAR briefing on aspects of the Council's work, held earlier the same week.

The opening evening featured informal remarks by Jan Eliasson, Swedish Ambassador to the United States and President-elect of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. His comments were followed by a give-and-take discussion on ways to facilitate the process of United Nations reform and renewal over the course of this critical year in the life of the Organization. Over the course of a full-day programme on 10 December, there were five panel sessions, plus luncheon remarks by Ambassador John C. Danforth, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. The five sessions focused on the following themes:

I. Evolving roles and working methods

II. Security Council committees and working groups

III. Handling the growing workload: coordination among and within permanent missions

IV. Seeking inputs from a range of sources and ensuring effective dissemination

V. Remaining questions and concerns

Session I
Evolving roles and working methods

Moderator:

Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

Commentators:

Ambassador Abdallah Baali
Permanent Representative of Algeria

Minister Michael von Ungern-Sternberg
Germany

Opening the session, the moderator observed that there had been an encouraging evolution of the Council's working methods over the years. Yet there remained unfortunate tendencies towards formality, reading prepared statements, and repeating what had already been said. While the Council had to be careful not to assume the responsibilities of other United Nations organs, there was value in thematic debates on core peace and security issues. In terms of negotiating resolutions, he noted a declining role for Permanent Representatives, as this function had been largely assumed by experts.

The commentators echoed the concern about too many repetitious and formal statements in Council debates. They stressed the need for cooperation among the elected members (the E-10), though they differed on the value of the informal meetings of the E-10, with one of them advocating a more regular schedule of E-10 sessions with a rotating chair. Noting that there were good and bad forms of transparency, one commentator called for more extensive use of drafting groups that included Member States not currently serving on the Council. He also urged an annual assessment of the Council's work, aided by experts and perhaps convened by an independent group.

In the ensuing discussion, considerable attention was devoted to the place of thematic debates in the work of the Council. A series of refinements in working methods were also discussed, including the issues of transparency, efficiency, relations with other principal organs, and the role played by the E-10. The legislative functions assumed by the Council were also touched upon.

Thematic debates and resolutions

Thematic issues, it was widely acknowledged, had become a common component of the Council's work. Concern was expressed, however, about the proliferation of thematic debates and the breadth of issues they addressed. While it was stressed that care should be taken not to intrude upon the mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, one speaker contended that the Security Council's tendency to address thematic matters reflected, in part, the failings of the other principal organs. Moreover, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change had underscored the need for a broad, cross-cutting understanding of collective security and the bulk of the themes addressed by the Council had fallen well within its peace and security mandate. Among those debates cited as particularly productive were those on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, on the rule of law and transitional justice, and on conflict prevention in Africa.

According to one speaker, however, at times it seemed as if thematic debates were used for domestic purposes as much as for those of the Council. In recent years, it had come to be expected that each monthly Presidency would highlight a particular theme. While this tendency was certainly understandable, given how infrequently members get to serve in this capacity, several discussants emphasized that the success of a given Presidency should not, and would not, be judged by whether it held a highly visible open debate on a topical theme. Two suggestions were made in this regard. One

was that an informal discussion be held among the Council members as a whole on how to organize thematic debates in a more productive manner. A second was that incoming members decide early on whether to focus on a thematic issue and, if so, which one.

Several discussants questioned the format of and follow-up to thematic debates. Some felt that such debates tended to be insufficiently focused and too abstract. Others called for the consideration of ways to facilitate greater interaction among the Council, the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and, in some cases, relevant United Nations agencies and programmes on selected thematic matters with broad implications. This was seen as particularly useful in cases where others would need to be involved in carrying out broad-based thematic resolutions. Some stressed the importance of having a concrete outcome in each case, in the form of a Council decision. Another discussant pointed out, though, that sometimes the debates themselves had proved to have an impact, as, for instance, in the case of the topic of "Women and peace and security". All were agreed, however, that such follow-up should be much more rigorous, with several participants noting that the implementation of such resolutions and presidential statements tended to be sporadic and inadequate. It was suggested that this would be an appropriate topic for the annual review advocated above.

Transparency

The Security Council, in the view of several participants, had taken a number of steps toward greater transparency, though more could be done in the future. In recent years, open briefings and debates had been held with greater frequency, including the sessions on weapons of mass destruction (resolution 1540) and on counter-terrorism (resolution 1566) in 2004. Still, some discussants contended that these open meetings tended to come late in the decision-making process and had little effect on the drafting of resolutions. The critical informal deliberations among permanent members, moreover, continued to exclude the E-10. Informing the wider United Nations membership about the work of the Council, it was pointed out, should be viewed as an obligation, rather than as a mere formality, especially when the Council considered matters affecting all Member States. Transparency was not always an asset, countered another discussant. Negotiating some particularly sensitive texts, such as resolutions 1483 (2003) and 1546 (2004) concerning Iraq, required informal consultations among Council members. A balance had to be maintained between transparency and productivity.

Efficiency

Given the increasing diversity of issues on its agenda, the Council had adopted new working methods to enhance its efficiency. Among those highlighted by the participants were greater reliance on expert groups and subsidiary bodies, closer cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union on Darfur and CARICOM and the OAS on Haiti, Council missions to conflict-torn regions, the occasional convening of sessions at the ministerial or summit levels, continuing consultations with troop-contributing countries and with NGOs through Arria-formula meetings, and informal discussions among Council members at the monthly luncheons with the Secretary-General and at retreats and workshops such as this. The net effect of these innovations had been to expand the range of views, information, and analysis available to the members of the Council in their deliberations.

Legislative role of the Council

According to several participants, the Security Council had assumed something of a legislative role on a number of occasions, such as in resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004). Some felt that this was to be expected given the breadth of the Council's responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security; others stressed that it should only be undertaken very carefully and only in exceptional circumstances. The compliance burdens placed on the United Nations general membership in such cases

argued for reaching out well beyond the confines of the Council when considering and developing such measures.

Session II
Security Council committees and working groups

Moderator:

Ambassador Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg
Permanent Representative of Brazil

Commentators:

Ambassador Alexander Konuzin
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

Ambassador Gheorghe Dumitru
Deputy Permanent Representative of Romania

Introducing the session, the moderator noted that the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies could have far-reaching consequences. The importance of the sanctions committees, for example, had been enhanced by the increasing use of this Article 41 instrument since the end of the cold war. There was a growing need, in his view, for better means to measure both the effectiveness and the humanitarian impact of sanctions. Since its establishment in 2000, the Working Group on Sanctions had been reviewing the working methods of sanctions regimes, such as procedures for listing, de-listing, and waivers, in an attempt to develop a set of recommendations to the Council. So far, agreement on the latter had proven elusive, but the effort continued.

The commentators addressed the work of the various committees and working groups dealing with counter-terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, areas of visible institutional growth and innovation over the past few years. Another participant elaborated on the work of the Working Group on Sanctions.

Counter-terrorism bodies

Established by resolution 1373 of September 2001, the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) was the most developed of these subsidiary bodies. With the recent creation of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the United Nations technical and analytical capacities for assisting States in the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1373 were considerably enhanced. It was intended that the CTED would take on the technical aspects of the work of the CTC, while the latter would focus on strategy and outreach. As mandated by resolution 1566 (2004), the first visits by the CTC to Member States to identify ways to build their capacities were to take place soon, along with another meeting with regional and sub-regional organizations, to be held in Almaty in early 2005. Pursuant to the same resolution, the CTC would develop best practices to assist States in implementing the provisions of resolution 1373 relating to the financing of terrorism. In addition, as urged by the High-level Panel, the CTC would need to give renewed attention to the question of how to handle countries that were consistently non-compliant with the provisions of resolution 1373.

The working group established by resolution 1566, on international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, would begin its work soon, concentrating on individuals, groups, and entities involved in or associated with terrorist activities other than Al-Qaida and the Taliban. It would develop recommendations for practical measures to bring violators to justice, to freeze financial their assets, to prevent their movement through Member States, and to prevent the supply to them of all types of arms and related material. It would also consider the possibility of establishing an international fund to compensate the victims of terrorist acts.

The 1267 Committee, established in 1999 to oversee sanctions against Al-Qaida and the Taliban, had accumulated substantial and valuable experience. As the High-level Panel had acknowledged, the lessons learned from the challenges faced by the Committee in seeking to compile and maintain accurate lists could be quite helpful to similar efforts now and in the future. To that end, the value of close cooperation and information-sharing among the 1267 Committee, the 1566 working group, and the CTC was underlined.

Launch of the 1540 Committee

The hurdles encountered in launching the 1540 Committee, established to report on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, were compared by one of the commentators to those facing an airplane trying to take off with a very heavy and sensitive cargo. It had taken many weeks to gain agreement on guidelines for the conduct of its work, the preparation of its reports, and the hiring of experts. The good news, however, was that the plane was now fully airborne and ready to proceed with its substantive work, despite the likelihood of turbulence along the way. It was hoped that some substantive results would be achieved in 2005, for the goal of preventing weapons of mass destruction from being acquired by terrorists or other armed groups was of paramount importance to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Working Group on Sanctions

The Working Group on Sanctions had also faced a number of difficult and divisive issues, it was reported. These included questions related to the duration of sanctions, the conditions for lifting them, and how to address the issue of populations affected by them. The nature of the report to be submitted by the Council had also proved controversial. It had eventually been decided to take a descriptive rather than a normative approach. This had commended itself as many of the recommendations contained in the report had already been incorporated in the Council's work, as a result of the Interlaken and Bonn-Berlin processes. It was recognized that there were a host of additional related matters that could be usefully addressed by the group.

Relationship between the Council and its subsidiary bodies

During the ensuing discussion, a number of concerns were voiced about the productivity of the eighteen subsidiary bodies and about their relationship to the Council. On the one hand, several speakers emphasized that the committees and working groups offered incoming members both an opportunity and a burden, as most were chaired by elected members. On the other hand, because they operate by consensus, progress could sometimes be difficult. Perhaps due in part to this practice, subsidiary bodies rarely raised controversial and consequential issues when reporting to the Council. Likewise, once the Council established a new group and defined its mandate, it tended to pay little attention to how its work was proceeding. As one speaker put it, the subsidiary bodies often ended up being the Council's "orphans." Another participant questioned whether it was wise for the Council to delegate so much apparent political authority to expert groups.

There was no unanimity among the participants on these matters. Defending the current system, one speaker saw little need for more detailed reporting to the Council as a whole, given that the same fifteen Member States serve at both levels. In the 661 Committee on Iraqi sanctions, he reminded the workshop, the debates were generally conducted at the rank of Permanent Representative. The subsidiary machinery, in his view, should be technically-oriented and relatively autonomous. In response, a second discussant noted that the distinctions between the Council and its subsidiary bodies were hard to understand, given that there should be no borders between them.

Getting from process to substance

Several speakers expressed frustration over the tendency of committees and working groups to dwell on questions of process, leaving little time or energy for important matters of substance. A discussant commented on two inadequately addressed priorities – peacekeeping oversight and counter-terrorism – to illustrate the point. In light of the growing number and complexity of peacekeeping operations, the challenges of working with regional and sub-regional organizations, the problems with training and the behaviour of some peacekeepers, and the need to integrate peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building efforts, who – he asked – was providing strategic oversight for the dozens of operations mandated by the Council? Had the working group concerned ever looked at these issues? With the Department of Peacekeeping Operations? In isolation? As for counter-terrorism, the Council had created four subsidiary bodies that lacked proper coordination and that seemed to be preoccupied with process rather than substance. Another participant noted that the wider membership was concerned that the Council had been providing insufficiently substantive responses to the myriad reports now required of Member States on issues such as counter-terrorism. If that trend continued, then the quality of reporting to the Council was likely to deteriorate.

Despite these concerns, a number of speakers stressed the importance of the work of the subsidiary bodies, which tended to be both under-reported and under-appreciated. The subsidiary bodies should accomplish their work with the maximum possible transparency and keep the wider membership informed of their activities. Because this work mattered and because these bodies were usually chaired by elected members, this was where new members could most readily make a difference.

Session III
Handling the growing workload: coordination among and within Permanent Missions

Moderator:

Ambassador Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo
Permanent Representative of Spain

Commentators:

Ambassador Joël W. Adechi
Permanent Representative of Benin

Ambassador Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative of the Philippines

The moderator observed that, since the early 1990s, the Security Council had been confronted with a growing and more nuanced workload. As a result, the Council needed to improve its working methods, which, in the case of negotiating resolutions, would benefit from a revival of past practices. In the early 1990s, the moderator recalled, much of the negotiation of resolutions had been conducted under the chairmanship of the President in informal consultations. The President, in turn, had encouraged participation from all Council members, including the E-10, in the negotiating process. Now, however, the Member States that put forward a draft text tended to lead the negotiations that followed, diminishing the President's role in this area. States that sponsored a resolution, moreover, tended to confer primarily with States that could veto their draft resolution, giving the E-10 less voice in the process.

According to one of the commentators, because of the multiplicity of issues addressed by the Council, newly-elected members should concentrate on a few issues of particular interest plus those most affecting their region, where their value added would be maximized. While the Council had improved its efforts to explain its decisions to other inter-governmental bodies, the complex nature of many current conflicts called for enhanced interaction with the other principal organs and with the wider United

Nations membership. Though he sympathized with the calls for restraint in limiting speakers lists, he reminded the participants that it would be difficult to coordinate who spoke on which topic because delegations tended to have instructions and often prepared texts from capitals about many of the issues before the Council.

At the previous year's workshop, the other commentator recalled, a number of valuable ideas for handling the workload efficiently had been put forward. As always, however, the problem was implementation. Since two thirds of the agenda items were self-generating and routine, efforts should be made to limit statements on reports of the Secretary-General, on ongoing mandates, and on issues where there was already consensus. While the President could do much to shape and manage the agenda, the commentator cautioned that formal meetings could become very lengthy if the Council membership were expanded to 24, as recommended by the High-level Panel. Either way, he agreed with those calling for an enhanced role for political coordinators, a subject discussed in depth at the last "Hitting the ground running" workshop.

From his perspective, the Council appeared to be a political body composed of concentric rings of influence, with the P-5 and P-1 on the inner ring. The permanent members seemed to sponsor most of the draft texts, and tended to carry out information deliberations with selected members that often preceded information consultations ("informal informals"). The leading position of the P-5 was enhanced, he believed, by the absence of a formal institutional memory in the Council. The Secretariat was very helpful on logistics but could not disclose what had happened in earlier informal sessions. The P-5, likewise, were helpful at points but could hardly be considered independent sources of information on precedents. A discussion followed on each of these points.

Negotiating texts

On the question of whether the President should routinely take the lead on negotiating texts, one participant cautioned that this would prove cumbersome and problematic. Decisions regarding whether to go for a consensus, majority, or compromise should be made by the sponsor(s) of the resolution. Generally speaking, the President should organize the work of the Council, not dictate its substance. Moreover, the expanded agenda of the Council had rendered Presidential leadership on every draft resolution impossible. Indeed, the tendency toward informal consultations among Council members had helped streamline the Council's deliberations.

Others, while conceding these points, stressed that these matters appear quite different to the P-5 and E-10, who generally got more of a voice when the President guided the process. They contended that the gap between the input of the P-5 and the E-10 in the drafting process should be narrowed. E-10 members, for example, were only included in selected negotiations, while P-5 members were always consulted. Yet others characterized relations among members of the Council as complex. The P-5 enjoyed substantial institutional advantages, but there was room for the E-10 to assert themselves at key points. While sponsors of resolutions did tend to look to the P-5 first, the P-5 in turn, often looked to the E-10 in informal consultations to provide feedback on their positions. The dynamics of the Council had produced a complex and dynamic system of trade-offs within which the E-10 could exercise influence in creative and meaningful ways. On this point, it was noted that there were moments for active engagement and moments for strategic silence.

Dispelling some 'mythology' about the P-5

Some speakers, moreover, took exception to the twin notions that the P-5 gained important advantages from a longer institutional memory and that they worked together to orchestrate the Council's work and agenda. According to one participant, the P-5 simply had more resources available to them in capitals and diplomatic posts, as any large Member State would. Due to the evolution of the Council's

agenda, in any case, a long institutional memory was of little help. The P-5, moreover, did not seek to coordinate or reconcile their positions on more than perhaps five to ten percent of the draft resolutions. Whatever advantages they enjoyed, in his view, derived more from being relatively large than from being a permanent member.

Delegating and streamlining the workload

Many regretted that one consequence of the Council's expanding agenda was that ambassadors were overburdened. On this point, it was widely agreed that political counsellors and experts could handle much of the Council's work. One participant estimated that only 15-20 percent of the Council's work needed to be conducted at the ambassadorial level. Transfer of less-controversial proceedings to the level of counsellors and experts would allow ambassadors to work on core issues and strategic planning. Others cautioned, however, against assigning too much responsibility to experts, who might overlook the broader political implications of seemingly technical or procedural matters. It was suggested, in this regard, that holding a brief political debate first might give experts better political guidance from the Council.

Political coordinators, it was noted, could be a valuable resource for incoming members, though Council members had not been utilizing them to their full potential. By serving as a clearinghouse for administrative issues, for example, political coordinators could greatly ease the Council's formal workload. They could also help prepare consultations, maintain lists of resolutions that had not been implemented, and identify which issues should be handled by Permanent Representatives and which could be assigned to political counsellors and experts.

Contributing to a more level playing field

What assistance and resources could elected members expect from the Secretariat? Participants agreed that the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs provided immense help in adjusting to the working methods of the Council. The Secretariat could be called upon to answer most questions and to assist with various problems that might arise during the two years that elected members spent on the Council. The Security Council Practices Branch was highlighted as a resource that elected members should explore. However, it was made clear that the Security Council Affairs Division could not provide Member States with the internal notes it might prepare for the Secretary-General. Several speakers urged the newly-elected members to tap into the information provided by key institutions and resources both within and outside the Organization. This could do much to ensure a smooth introduction to the Council's varied activities and working methods.

Session IV
Seeking inputs from a range of sources and ensuring effective dissemination

Moderator:

Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière
Permanent Representative of France

Commentators:

Ambassador Wegger Strømmen
Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway

Mr. Georges Pachsanu
International Committee of the Red Cross

The session addressed several of the avenues through which the Security Council gathered and disseminated information: Security Council missions, interaction with NGOs via the Arria formula and in less structured meetings, the media, and the wider United Nations membership. The moderator stressed the utility of Security Council missions, which had, in recent years, helped to expand the Council's understanding of conflicts based on first-hand information-gathering. Direct contact with players in a conflict situation had allowed the Council to explain its resolutions and positions, to assist the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, and to enhance the quality of debate within the Council. However, decisions had to be made about where and how often such missions were undertaken. Should every Council member participate in every mission? At what level should they be represented? Who should lead the missions? And should joint missions with other United Nations organs be encouraged? When the decision had been made to launch a mission, he continued, the leader should ensure that 1) there were clear and appropriate terms of reference, 2) the programme of meetings was selective and well-targeted, focusing on Heads of State and parties to the conflict, and 3) there was an effective plan for dealing with the media.

Turning to relations with NGOs, the moderator posed a provocative question: was the Arria formula still valid? He was concerned that the process, while initially valuable, had become too formalized. The most informative and interesting meetings now took place in less structured settings. In terms of the media, the good news was that the Council's growing success had brought renewed press attention. The bad news was that, as a result, there were new pressures on Council members. The President of the Council should be prepared to interact with media outlets frequently in order to faithfully and fully communicate the Council's positions. Other Security Council members might choose to have a high or low profile, but the President had no choice but to work as productively as possible with the media.

Security Council missions

The commentators concurred that Security Council missions offered a unique opportunity for gathering and disseminating information. They provide a means for interacting directly with NGOs on the ground, though sometimes the latter had been embedded in the conflicts for so long as to lose their independent perspectives. Dispatching smaller missions, as some of the Council's subsidiary bodies had done successfully, was highlighted as an idea worth pursuing. However, it was argued that missions should generally be conducted at the ambassadorial level given that Council members were expected to meet with dignitaries and Heads of State.

Are Security Council missions too expensive? Some participants thought they were and argued for reducing the number of participants when possible. Others called for breaking into smaller groups as a cost-effective way to cover more ground in the same amount of time. Some speakers disagreed, seeing efforts to trim mission costs as a false economy. As one participant phrased it, putting the Council

members in direct contact with the objects of their work was a worthwhile investment, even if it was expensive. In order to do proper planning for Council missions, it was suggested that they be funded through a standing budget, rather than through last-minute ad hoc appeals. A sense of what was in prospect was provided by a recitation of planned missions. Among those under consideration for 2005 were missions to Kosovo, Central Africa, and West Africa.

While some participants stressed that input from local NGOs on the ground could enhance Council members' understanding of the political, social, and humanitarian dimensions of local conflict, others urged primary reliance on information and analysis from United Nations agencies, the Secretariat, and peacekeeping and political missions. It was also suggested that Council members should use such missions as an opportunity to visit and talk with peacekeepers in the region. This could serve both to show support and to provide direct and candid feedback on how a peace operation was faring and what unforeseen obstacles it might be facing.

NGOs and the Arria formula

A number of speakers commented on the contributions that Arria-formula sessions had made over the past dozen years as a constructive and innovative way to introduce independent perspectives and fresh information into Council deliberations. Several of them also remarked, however, on the declining utility of such sessions from the Council's standpoint. It was stressed that more informal meetings with NGOs, which now occurred frequently, were considered to be a simpler and more effective way of gaining their often valuable input. As one speaker noted, such informal interactions accounted for the large bulk of the contacts national missions had with their NGO partners.

To appear to be backing away from the Arria formula at this point, however, warned one speaker, would be to give the wrong signal about the Council's commitment to transparency and to welcoming a range of viewpoints. Others saw continued value in these sessions. They noted, for example, that as the Council's work continued to move into the humanitarian sphere, it could benefit from the NGOs' rich experience and long history in humanitarian affairs. In addition, Council members were urged to make as full use as possible of the ideas, information, and analytical resources available from various think tanks and universities.

At the same time, some participants underlined the importance of taking full advantage of the United Nations own sources of information and analysis as the first recourse. Many parts of the Secretariat could be useful, such as the Secretary-General's office, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Special Representatives, among others. The Secretary-General's Military Adviser and Legal Counsel could be helpful in the drafting of mandates. There were times, though, when independent voices could be especially valuable. In addition, regional and sub-regional organizations sometimes had insights concerning the local political, economic, and historical context of a dispute or conflict.

A brief overview was provided on the work of the ICRC. As an inter-governmental body, the ICRC had developed a special set of relationships with the Security Council. Much of this interaction was achieved through a monthly ICRC briefing of the President of the Council plus frequent informal contacts with the permanent missions of the members of the Council.

Working with the media and other Member States

While stressing that the media can be a useful tool for the dissemination of Council conclusions and statements, one participant urged caution in relying primarily upon media reports. Rather, it was emphasized that members should dig for more information and analysis from other sources as well. Elected members, moreover, should not assume that media coverage would keep other Member States from their region informed of the work of the Council. That remained a responsibility of all Council

members and particularly of the E-10. Holding regular meetings – even two or three times a week – with regional and other groups was highly recommended. As one speaker put it, this required significant resources, but had proven to be a great investment.

Session V
Remaining questions and concerns

Moderator:

Ambassador Munir Akram
Permanent Representative of Pakistan

Commentators:

Ambassador Zhang Yishan
Deputy Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China

Professor Edward C. Luck
Director, Center on International Organization, Columbia University

Joseph Stephanides
Director, Security Council Affairs Division, Department of Political Affairs

The moderator noted that the Security Council was assigned primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Yet, the bulk of its time was spent on addressing internal conflicts. Many of the issues that seriously threatened international peace and security were dealt with outside the Council.

The moderator posed a number of questions for future reflection. Was the Council, he asked, utilizing Chapter VI as fully as it should? Should the Council be more active on pacific settlement? Should the Council explore more creatively the space between Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter? Would revisiting the nuances of these articles help the Council to better position itself to deal with the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Was post-conflict peace-building the best use of the Council's time and resources? Should the Council sub-contract some of this work to a subsidiary body or to a composite committee of United Nations principal organs in order to leave more time to address more immediate threats to international peace and security? Was this an area for closer cooperation with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council? The ensuing discussion touched briefly on a number of items, including several for possible consideration at future "Hitting the ground running" workshops.

Time management

One of the commentators underlined the need for better time management, as the number of agenda items, meetings, resolutions, and presidential statements was on the rise. If one delegation made a long speech, he cautioned, others often felt the need to do the same. He urged the members not to propose subjects that look unlikely to result in any direct action.

High-level Panel report

Several speakers wondered if (and how) the Council would have an opportunity to reflect on the High-level Panel's recommendations over the coming year, given their implications for the Council's work on peace-building, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and conflict prevention, among other matters. One participant stressed that 2005 would be a challenging year for the Council given both the sweeping recommendations of the High-level Panel report and the five-year

review of the Millennium Declaration. There was a need for the Council to do some serious strategic thinking, it was underlined, something it normally finds little time to do.

Rules of procedure

Concern was also expressed about the long-standing provisional status of the Council's rules of procedure. One participant asked about the possibility of finalizing the rules of procedure in the near future. However, it was pointed out that the dynamism of the Council was made possible, at least in part, by the flexibility provided by its provisional rules.

Preparation of incoming members

Newly-elected members expressed concern about the limited time and information available to prepare for their work on the Council. There was a lot of public commentary about the work of the Council, but very little solid information on its procedures, precedents, and working methods – the kinds of things new members most need to understand. It was suggested that a handbook with basic information be provided to incoming members, perhaps prepared by the Secretariat or an independent entity, such as Columbia University. In addition, a more systematic sharing of information among the newly-elected members was suggested as a way of avoiding duplication of preparatory efforts.

Holding this workshop in early December worked well, according to some of the incoming members, because they had by that time been able to observe some of the informal consultations. Among the possible topics identified for future "Hitting the ground running" workshops were 1) the working methods of subsidiary bodies, 2) new approaches to dealing with NGOs and the media, 3) the drafting of resolutions and the role of the Presidency, and 4) how to address questions of implementation, assessment, and accountability.